Research Notes for Samuel James Roach (1865 - 1936)

Research Overview:

Samuel James Roach was born in rural Ontario to a father who emigrated from England and adopted a modified surname in Canada. His mother probably emigrated from Ireland, adopted a new surname, and changed her religion.

By adulthood, Samuel crossed the border into the United States, settled permanently in Grand Rapids, and built a life that was outwardly stable and locally rooted, yet marked by quiet disconnections, including a permanent move from Canada and a conversion to Catholicism in adulthood. He appears consistently in records as reliable and long-standing: a mail carrier for decades, a church member, a fraternal joiner, a homeowner on the same street for years. At the same time, his early life is thinly documented, his mother dies while he is still young, and family connections persist but remain largely outside his daily life.

Speculative Narrative:

Intentionally left blank

Timeline

29 May 1865 – **Born** at Thorndale, Ontario, Canada.[1]

No baptismal record has been identified at area churches or the Anglican records of the Huron Diocese.

1871- Census of Canada at Ontario, Canada.[2]

Charles Roach, 46

Elinar Roach, 49

William F Roach, 17

Elinar Roach, 16

Sarah Roach, 14

Charles H Roach, 12

Maria M Roach, 9

George W Roach, 7

Samuel Roach, 6

1885 - Arrival from Canada to the US.[3]

The route, date, and port of entry have not been identified.

Settlement in Grand Rapids

[1] Find Birth record

[2] "Canada Census, 1871", , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M4QT-17M: Fri Mar 08 08:43:51 UTC 2024), Entry for Charles Roach and Elinar Roach, 1871.

[3] Superior Court of Grand Rapids - applied April 29, 1892

How Samuel Roach met Mary Ellen McEvoy: After moving from Thorndale, Ontario, to Grand Rapids, Samuel Roach boarded at a rooming house owned by Charles Patrick McEvoy and his wife, Ellen Emperor. It was there that he met their daughter, Mary Ellen McEvoy. Following their marriage, Mary Ellen's parents built the house at 710 Lafayette NE, which became the family home. Their oldest daughter, Helen Roach, continued to live there until she entered a nursing home in about 1979.

12 May 1886 - Death of mother Ellen Delaney / Lane (1837 - 1886) at Petersburg, Ontario, Canada.

Feb 1893 - Religious conversion and confirmation at Grand Rapids, at Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan.[4] Samuel Roach converted to Roman Catholicism three months before his wedding. He was confirmed, taking the name James**.**

23 May 1893 - Marriage at Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan.[5]

St James Church. Witnesses: Thomas H. and Nellie McShane.

20 Mar 1894 - Birth of daughter Helen Marie Roach (1894 - 1982) at Ada, Kent, Michigan.[6]

5 Jul 1895 - Birth of daughter Elizabeth Louise Roach (1895 - 1964) at Ada, Kent, Michigan.[7]

[4] Conversion papers at the Grand Rapids Catholic Church

[5] Michigan Marriages 1868 - 1925, Kent County, Michigan, marriage of Samuel J. Roach and Mary E. McEvoy, May 22, 1893, no 6685. Family Search.

[6] Michigan Births 1867 - 1902," Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan, birth of Helen Marie Roach, 20 March 1894, no. 3198. FamilySearch.

[7] "Michigan Births, 1867 - 1902," Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan. Birth of Bessie L Roach, 5 Jul 1895, no 5667; FamilySearch.

4 Apr 1896 - Naturalization at Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan.[8]

Superior Court of Grand Rapids. He applied 29 Apr 1892.

5 Aug 1897 -Birth of son Charles Hubert "Hugh" Roach (1897 - 1974) at Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan.[9]

1898 - Directory at 404 N Lafayette in Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan.[10]

1899 - Directory at 404 N Lafayette in Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan.[11]

City directory listings are retained here to document residence during a period when the family has not been located in the 1900 census.

17 Dec 1899 - Birth of daughter Frances Lamira Roach (1899 - 1983) at Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan**.**[12]

1900 - U.S. Census - Not located; family appears in city directories at 404 N. Lafayette during this period.

[8] "United States Census, 1910", , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:ML5T-LN7: Tue Jul 23 16:28:11 UTC 2024), Entry for Samuel J Roach and Marie Roach, 1910.

[9] "Michigan Births, 1867-1902", , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:NQXZ-1YC: Sat Mar 09 03:34:17 UTC 2024), Entry for Chas.h. Roach and Samuel Roach, 05 Aug 1897.

[10] U.S. City Directories, 1821-1989, Ancestry

[11] U.S. City Directories, 1821-1989, Ancestry

[12] "Michigan Births, 1867 - 1902," Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan. Birth of Francis Lamyra Roach, 17 December 1899, no 15201; FamilySearch.

1 Jul 1901 - Listed in the **Military Register of Civil, Military, and Naval members.**[13]

3 Oct 1901 - Death of father Charles Henry Rook / Roach (1822 - 1901) at Petersburg, Ontario, Canada**.**[14]

15 Nov 1901 – Birth of son Gerald Edward Roach (1901 - 1955) at Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan.[15]

8 Nov 1905 – Birth of son S. Jerome Roach (1905 - 1970) at Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan.[16]

16 Oct 1909 -Birth of son Thomas Gerard Lucian Roach (1909 - 1977) at Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan.[17]

1910 - U.S. Census in Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan.[18]

Samuel Roach - head of household, male, white, age 44, married, born in Canada, father born England, mother born Ireland

[13] U.S., Register of Civil, Military, and Naval Service, 1863-1959

[14] Province of Ontario Death Registration 1901-05-028118 - CHR's obit agrees with the info given on his death certificate, indicating he was 78 years, 1 month, and 11 days old at death. An incorrect age of death was copied from an entry below his death notice.

[15] "Michigan Births, 1867 - 1902," Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan. Birth of Gerald Edward Roach, 15 November 1901, no 17584; FamilySearch.

[16] Birth Record for son S. Jerome Roach

[17] Birth: State of Michigan; Department of Community Health; Certificate of Live Birth; Thomas Gerald Lucien Roach; 16 October 1909; Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan; Issued 5 September 2014.

[18] "United States Census, 1910", , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:ML5T-LN7: Tue Jul 23 16:28:11 UTC 2024), Entry for Samuel J Roach and Marie Roach, 1910.

Marie Roach - female, white, age 34, married, born in Michigan, parents born in Canada/ Ireland.

Helen Roach - female, white, age 25, single, born in Michigan, parents born in Canada/Michigan.

Bessie Roach- female, white, age 14, single, born in Michigan, parents born in Canada/Michigan.

Hubert Roach- male, white, age 12, single, born in Michigan, parents born in Canada/Michigan.

Frances Roach- female, white, age 10, single, born in Michigan, parents born in Canada/Michigan.

Gerald Roach- male, white, age 8, single, born in Michigan, parents born in Canada/Michigan.

Jerome Roach- male, white, age 10, single, born in Michigan, parents born in Canada/Michigan.

Lueien Roach - male, white, age 0, single, born in Michigan, parents born in Canada/Michigan.

1 Apr 1911 - Birth of daughter Dorothy Esther Roach (1911 - 1982) at Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan.[19]

15 Jun 1911 - Death of sister Sarah Elizabeth Roach (1857 - 1911) at Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan.[20]

[19] "United States Social Security Death Index," database, *FamilySearch* (https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:JLMY-PMW: 9 January 2021), Dorothy Hansen, Jun 1982; citing U.S. Social Security Administration, *Death Master File*, database (Alexandria, Virginia: National Technical Information Service, ongoing).

[20] "Find a Grave Index," , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVVY-DZ8B : 15 December 2020), Sarah Elizabeth Roach Thomson, ; Burial, Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan, United States of America, Greenwood Cemetery; citing record ID 27776372, *Find a Grave*, http://www.findagrave.com.

11 Aug 1916 - Death of half-brother William Francis "Frank" Cornell (1854 - 1916) at Germfask, Schoolcraft, Michigan.[21]

4 Feb 1919 - Death of sister Mary Margaret Roach (1862 - 1919) at New Liskeard, Ontario, Canada.[22]

1920 - U.S. Census in Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan.[23]

Samuel J Roach - head, owns, male, white, age 54, married, can read, can write, born Canada, father born England, mother born Ireland, mailman.

Mary E Roach - wife, female, white, age 47, married, can read, can write, born Michigan, father born Canada, mother born Ireland.

Helen M Roach - daughter , female, white, age 25, born Michigan, father born Canada, mother born Michigan.

Elizabeth L Roach - daughter , female, white, age 24, born Michigan, father born Canada, mother born Michigan.

C Hubert Roach - son, male, white, age 22, born Michigan, father born Canada, mother born Michigan.

Frances L Roach - daughter , female, white, age 20, born Michigan, father born Canada, mother born Michigan.

Gerald Roach - son, male, white, age 18, born Michigan, father born Canada, mother born Michigan.

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[21] "Find a Grave Index," database, *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVK2-PKVV: 10 September 2021), William Francis Cornell, ; Burial, Germfask Township, Schoolcraft, Michigan, United States of America, Germfask Cemetery; citing record ID 45814994, *Find a Grave*, http://www.findagrave.com.

[22] "Canada, Ontario Deaths, 1869-1937 and Overseas Deaths, 1939-1947," database with images, *FamilySearch* (https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:JDPQ-VJ4: 2 March 2021), Mary Margaret Beilsteiu, 04 Feb 1919; citing Dymond, Timiskaming, Ontario, yr 1919 cn 31383, Registrar General. Archives of Ontario, Toronto; FHL microfilm 1,862,968.

[23] "United States Census, 1920", , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MZ3Y-724: Thu Mar 07 23:40:17 UTC 2024), Entry for Samuel J Roach and Mary E Roach, 1920.

S. Jerome Roach - son, male, white, age 14, born Michigan, father born Canada, mother born Michigan.

Dorothy E Roach daughter , female, white, age 12, born Michigan, father born Canada, mother born Michigan.

13 Jul 1924 - Death of brother George Walter Roach (1863 -1924) at Toronto, Ontario, Canada.[24]

5 Mar 1927 - Death of brother Charles Henry Roach (1860 - 1927) at Fort Williams, Ontario, Canada.[25]

1930 - U.S. Census at Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan[26]

Samuel J Roach - Head, owns, worth ?, has a radio, male, white, age 64, married, first at age ?, born Canada, parents born England/Ireland, mailman.

Mary E Roach - wife, female, white, age 57, married, first at age ?, born Michigan, parents born Canada/Michigan.

Helen M Roach - daughter, female, white, single, age 36, born Michigan, parents born Canada/Michigan.

Gerald Roach, 28 - son, female, white, single, age 28, born Michigan, parents born Canada/Michigan.

Jerome Roach - son, male, white, single, age 36, born Michigan, parents born Canada/Michigan.

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[24] "Canada, British Columbia Death Registrations, 1872-1986; 1992-1993", , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:FLBV-SFS: Wed Apr 03 20:51:43 UTC 2024), Entry for Mary Gertrude Weaver and George Walter Roach, 04 Sep 1973.

[25] "Canada, Ontario Deaths, 1869-1937 and Overseas Deaths, 1939-1947", , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:JKWK-4ZZ: Tue Jul 16 06:39:41 UTC 2024), Entry for Charles Roach and Charles Roach, 05 Mar 1927.

[26] "United States Census, 1930", , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XQBJ-8SD: Sun Mar 10 05:35:59 UTC 2024), Entry for Samuel J Roach and Mary E Roach, 1930.

Thomas Roach - son, male, white, single, age 20, born Michigan, parents born Canada/Michigan.

Dorothy E Roach - daughter, female, white, single, age 19, born Michigan, parents born Canada/Michigan.

19 Mar 1935 - Death of wife Mary Ellen McEvoy (1872 - 1935) at Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan.[27]

12 May 1936 - Death at Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan.[28]

May 1936 - Obituary

Postman Roach on the Job, for 24 years, is Dead at 70

Funeral services for Samuel J. Roach, 70, a former mail carrier, who died Tuesday morning at his home, 710 Lafayette ave, NE, will be held Friday morning at 9 o'clock at St. Alphonsus church. Burial will be in St. Andrew's cemetery.

Mr. Roach had been a resident here for 50 years and served as a mail carrier for 24 years. He was the manager of the Manufacturers building for eight years. He was a member of the Holy Name society of St. Alphonsus church and a charter member of St. Vincent de Paul society. He also belonged to the Modern Woodmen.

[27] Michigan Department of Health, death certificate state office no. 3276 (1935), Mary E Roach; Division of Vital Statistics, Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan. Death notice of Mrs. Mary E. Roach. Grand Rapids Herald Mar 1935.

[28] Michigan Department of Health, death certificate state office no. 6447 (1936), Samuel J. Roach; Division of Vital Statistics, Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan. Death notice for Samuel J Roach, Grand Rapids Herald, 13 May 1936. Death notices for Samuel J. Roach (date and newspaper unknown) and Mrs. Mary E. Roach 20 Mar 1935.

Surviving are four sons, C Hubert, Gerald E., S. Jerome, and Thomas G., and four daughters, Mrs. EP Whalen, Mrs. E. Blakely, Miss Helen M., and Miss Dorothy E. Roach, and one sister, Mrs. Ellen Heyd of Grand Rapids. Interment at St. Andrew's Cemetery"

15 May 1936 - Burial at St. Andrews Cemetery in Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan.[29]

[29] "Find a Grave Index," database, *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVVK-RV78: 15 December 2020), Samuel James Roach, ; Burial, Grand Rapids, Kent, Michigan, United States of America, Saint Andrews Catholic Cemetery; citing record ID 23403807, *Find a Grave*, http://www.findagrave.com.